LABOUR MONTHLY

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Vietnam—a Voice from Sweden — Olof Palme
'Middle-class Radicalism' — review by R.P.D.
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AUGUST 1968

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CONTENTS

Page

Notes of the Month: Unity of the Left. *After Brown, Gunter—Alarm among the Hard-Core Right—Movement of Opinion—Paradox? Contradiction?— Trade Union Protest—There's a Battle to Fight . . .—An American Cousin—More About France—More about the Myths—Communists and Workers—A Field for United Action—What's Stopping Them?* .. **Andrew Rothstein** 337

Forty Years Ago 352

Coal and Power. Miners' leader examines crisis in fuel industry and demands national plan .. .. **Will Paynter** 353

The British Railways Board takes to the Air. How an across-the-board increase for railwaymen was won .. **Dave Bowman** 356

The Arts Today. A Declaration of Intent, **Maurice Cohen;** Pictures of Matchgirls and Ford women strikers; Colour and Casting, **Peter Pouviez;** What Happened to Hancock, **Tony Selby** 359

Vietnam—a Voice from Sweden. Stirring call to end US war by Swedish Minister of Education .. .. **Olof Palme** 366

The Royal Commission. The purpose behind the Government Report on trade unions and employers .. **R. Page Arnot** 369

The Message is—Fight! Government beats retreat in face of determined industrial action .. .. .. **John Ball** 375

Scorpio Cartoon 378

Book Reviews: 'Reap the Whirlwind', Geoffrey Bing, 'Dark Days in Ghana', Kwame Nkrumah: *D. N. Pritt*; 'Middle-class Radicalism', Frank Parkin: *R.P.D.*; 'Black Skin White Masks', Frantz Fanon: *Joan Bellamy* 379

Neither a Borrower . . . . **Helen Falber** 384

Publications Received .. .. Inside back cover

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Notes of the Month

UNITY OF THE LEFT

July 15, 1968

More and more the unity of all forces of the left emerges as an urgent necessity. In Britain it arises from the way the unions are beginning to break through the shackles of the incomes policy, the profound concern at Labour's shattering election defeats in face of the multiplying difficulties pressing on the people, and the resort of the Labour Government once again to vast foreign credits. In Britain's closest neighbour it arises from the certainty that de Gaulle's election victory settles none of the basic problems which emerged during the great days of May and June, and from contrast between the massive stand of the working class under Communist leadership and the confusion among the various spokesmen of other exploited groups. Meanwhile, on top of the American aggression in Vietnam, tension continues to threaten peace in Europe: a problem which should concern all socialist and progressive people.

After Brown, Gunter

On Monday, July 1, the British public was startled to read in its newspapers a letter to Harold Wilson from Ray Gunter, MP, once president of the Transport Salaried Staffs Association (and staff captain at British Movement Control Headquarters in Iraq during the last war), resigning his post as Minister of Power—and in the most brutal terms: 'I no longer desire to be a member of your Government.' Coming after the dismissal of George Brown, *The Times* editorial commented next day, this meant that the Government had lost 'its only two members who command the affection or the loyalty of the mass of trade unionists.'

The mass of trade unionists—the rank and file of the Labour Party in particular—had not assembled to tell the leader-writer their opinion: or he would probably have heard a Homeric roar of laughter. For George Brown was the reliable 'commissar' whom the right wing attached to Harold Wilson when he was elected leader on

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Gaitskell's death. It was George Brown who was responsible for the ill-fated 'national plan' to restore Britain's financial position in the world at the expense of the working class, and the prices and incomes policy which went with it—and which the trade union movement has since rejected with emphatic majorities. And Ray Gunter, famous as a right winger both in the trade union movement and in the Labour Party long before Harold Wilson became Prime Minister in 1964, earned well-deserved notoriety as Minister of Labour for his consistent denunciation of strikes and strikers.

If there are two ex-Ministers in the Labour Party ranks for whom 'the mass of trade unionists' have very little affection, it is these two.

Alarm among the Hard-Core Right

Why then did Gunter walk out? His replacement as Minister for Labour (with another title) by Barbara Castle—once the darling of the Labour Left—and her appointment to Brown's old post, also under another title, supplied a clue to the answer even before Gunter's resignation. And the answer was driven in deeper by the attack on the Government, as 'hopelessly out of balance,' by another notable right winger, Alfred Robens (yet a third ex-Minister for Labour) on July 3: he also stated his agreement with Mr. Gunter. Then, two days later, another ex-Minister, Mr. Austen Albu—who in 1952 earned fame for his discovery, in *New Fabian Essays*, that 'the increasing welfare of the working class has taken the edge off the feeling of exploitation'—proclaimed on TV that 'a majority of back-benchers' want Wilson to resign as Prime Minister and Party leader, in order to 'strengthen confidence in the Government.'

All these outbursts, taken together, indicate the fear of the hard-core right wing that, unless they call a halt, the Government may slip too far to the 'left' (even more 'out of balance,' that is). After Barbara Castle's distinguished performances as champion of the prices and incomes policy, and as exponent of it in practice against the trade unions, the suggestion that she is a harbinger of the left-wing peril may well call forth a smile. But the manoeuvre of putting a reputed left-winger up to do right-wing work is an old one in the labour movement: in the twenties with the aspiring miners' leader Frank Hodges, in the thirties with socialist veterans like George Lansbury and (in his last years) A. J. Cook. The real question behind these moves on the personality chess board is, why should the Prime Minister (and his critics) think them important?

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Movement of Opinion

The movement in working class opinion revealed at the May municipal elections and the subsequent by-elections at Brightside, Oldham West and Nelson and Colne, was the real stimulus. Millions of those who supported Labour at the 1966 General Election 'voted with their feet'—by going anywhere rather than to the polling booth; thousands of active Labour Party people, who ordinarily helped to bring out the voters, did the same—by going anywhere rather than to the voters' doorstep. Such was the verdict one heard on all sides in the boroughs, long before it was recorded in the capitalist press. And the reason was obvious—disgust and disillusionment. The wage freeze, rising prices and rents, the health service charges, the contrast in these respects between the situation of the rich and the poor: the constant burden of defence expenditure, the waste of young manpower across half the world (from 'east of Suez' to the Rhine), the slavish support of the USA in its Vietnam aggression, the practical immunity guaranteed to the modern slaveowners in Rhodesia: the half-hearted measures against racialism, neither fish nor flesh, neither fowl nor red herring, and the threat of penal measures against the unions—some of these events have alienated most of the missing voters, most of them have disheartened great numbers of the active Labour rank and file.

Of course abstention is not the way for convinced Socialists, and there were thousands among them, members of the Labour Party and the Communist Party, who opposed it. The results—sweeping Tory majorities in dozens of towns—have worsened the situation for the working class. But one aspect of the event requires serious and objective consideration. The mass abstention, in the present circumstances, was a form of protest—often angrily voiced—against the way the Labour leaders had deceived their supporters at the General Election (and not only that of 1966). It was an expression of disillusionment, inadequate in itself: but it could become something far bigger—not in the direction of still wider abstention, but in the direction of a searching review of how far traditional Labour Party policy had really advanced the cause of Socialism. The fundamentals of reformism, of collaboration of classes for the maintenance of capitalism, might come under fire. There could be an advance from abstention towards a determined struggle to change policy, not a further relapse into passivity which helps the Tories. The right wing majority of the Labour leaders have understood this, although they have drawn varying tactical conclusions.

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Paradox? Contradiction?

Such 'voting with the feet' has occurred before—but there is a decisive difference this time. Never for fifty years has it coincided with a marked increase in militancy and political activity of the bulk of the trade union and co-operative movement. And this points to a new way forward. Above all in their rejection of the incomes policy and Government threats, but also in their demand for the end of bombing in Vietnam and of Britain's tie-up with the USA in this question, for a drastic cut in expenditure on 'defence', for more nationalisation, for more vigorous action against racialism, and on other issues, many unions have shown that they are far from indifferent to political questions—and on practically all of them directly in opposition to right-wing Labour policy. Perhaps the most far-reaching of these was the decision of the Transport and General Workers, on July 2, to end the ban on Communists holding elected posts in the union, in force since 1949. This restored democratic unity in the largest British union, at the time when the most urgent problem of the Labour movement is clearly that of unity of the organised, without which effective unity with the unorganised in common struggles (one of them, not the least important, on the electoral field) is not thinkable.

There is no mystery about the reason for this divergence, this seeming paradox, this apparent contradiction, between Labour's electoral reverses and the militancy of organised labour (with a small l) in the unions and the co-operative movement. It is the widespread, and still spreading, realisation of the enormity of the blow which the right wing controllers of the Labour Party have been dealing at the unions by the penal clauses of their Prices and Incomes Acts in the last two years. It was the trade unions which, together with the small Socialist societies then existing, which brought the Labour Party into existence at the historic Memorial Hall conference on February 27 and 28, 1900, for the express purpose of promoting 'legislation in the direct interests of Labour.' A glance at any conference report of the Labour Party will show that the unions supply most of its funds, cast some five-sixths of the conference votes, and determine the composition of most of the National Executive. But by threatening those who promote wage struggles with the pains and penalties of the Act, the right wing majority of the Labour leadership has struck at the very reason for the Labour Party's existence. It has laid the axe to the very root out of which the Labour Party has grown these sixty-eight years—its trade union support. No wonder the

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Tories have supported it through thick and thin: they see clearly ahead the use of this precedent for still more malignant purposes of their own (the new Donovan Report curtailing union freedom is but a foretaste). No wonder bewilderment among the rank and file has been followed by deep resentment, resentment by bitter disheartenment—and disheartenment on polling day accompanied by increasing militancy on the industrial field.

Trade Union Protest

At the end of June, the annual conference of the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions by a huge majority (over 1,450,000 to 238,000, with 271,000 abstaining) denounced the incomes policy and the Labour Government's threat to the unions. At the beginning of July came the victory of the women strikers at Fords—historic for two reasons. First, it is a token of revival: in 1962 the American-controlled management was able with impunity to get rid of militant shop stewards as 'trouble-makers.' Secondly, this first strike in British industrial history of women for equal pay and grading with men—after the innumerable resolutions and publicity on the subject—not only secured an immediate rise to over 90 per cent of the men's rate, but forced a public pledge out of the Government that it would discuss with employers and the TUC a scheme for introducing equal pay for equal work generally, over the next few years.

Then came the decision of the Transport Workers, already mentioned: and on the same day the turning-point in the work-to-rule movement of the railwaymen, which had begun on June 24. Slowly but inexorably it had begun to affect the whole national economy, and neither the propaganda of the Railways Board about the railwaymen not applying the work-to-rule (which did not prevent the total closing-down of the railways for the first weekend of the movement), nor the threat to stop paying 40,000 workers because there was nothing for them to do, had any effect. Now a flagrant attempt, backed by the Government, to divide the workers and thus wreck the movement—by an offer of wage increases to a section of the NUR only, with practically nothing for the Locomen—was rejected by the annual conference of the NUR at Penzance (62-14) and unanimously by the executive committee of the ASLE and F. The Government and the management had to climb down, their representative flew to Penzance, and by the second weekend the aim of the work-to-rule had been secured: a straight wage-increase all

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round (to some extent compensating for the rise in living costs since the last settlement in 1966) before there could be any talk about a productivity agreement.

The National Union of Mineworkers at their annual conference unanimously adopted decisions to press for a substantial increase for day-wage men and pensions at 60 for miners (July 2), demanded the immediate and unconditional cessation of the bombardment of North Vietnam, the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Vietnam and the complete dissociation of the British Government from the USA in this matter (July 3), and rejected the Government's White Paper of 1967 on Fuel, under which massive closures and a general run-down of Britain's coal industry are in progress (July 4).

Thus some of the most powerful unions in basic industries have directly opposed Government policy on the very issues which have caused disgust among the Labour rank and file. These unions, if they so decide, can bring their point of view effectively to bear within the Labour Party. This is the logic of their protest. It is the logic (though not pursued consistently, as failure to condemn the incomes policy shows) of the 'Socialist Charter' published at the beginning of June by *Tribune*. It is the logic of the national conference to discuss 'The Socialist Way Forward for the Labour Movement' called for Sunday, November 3, by the *Morning Star*.

There's a Battle to Fight . . .

Of course there are ideological battles to fight on the way—of which there have been some interesting reminders. Thus *The Times* (July 9) thought it useful to devote nearly two columns on its leader page to 'Dissolving Some of Labour's Myths,' by Mr. Raymond Fletcher, Labour MP for Ilkeston. These are the myths that fill conference agendas, he says (with the Labour Party conference primarily in mind). The workers, he says, 'are an intensively conservative class': the trade unionists who are moving against the government are not 'moving to the left,' they only 'want more wages,' and they are not pressing for 'more public ownership.' Labour once talked to a class—now it has to learn 'the more subtle art of talking to individuals.' It must dissolve the myths of 'early Socialist pamphlets,' if it wants to hold office for more than five years in twenty.

These ideas are not very novel or refreshing, as reference to the works of Mr. Albu and his colleagues sixteen years ago, mentioned earlier, will easily demonstrate. One might imagine that the right

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wing leaders of the Labour Party—once they got the majority in 1945 that gave them 'power, not merely office,' of which they used to talk in the thirties—had ever attempted to put into practice the principles of the 'early Socialist pamphlets,' the basic one in particular of expropriating the capitalist class. The opposite is the case. And if the working class is so conservative, why did it give such an overwhelming majority to Labour in 1945 on the distinctly Socialist promises in the election programme *Let Us Face The Future?* When workers press for more wages, against a Government which is threatening wage restraint by Court prosecutions; when their organisations do press for more public ownership, as the TUC and Labour Party conference agendas regularly show; that is just what 'moving to the left' means, in class (not parliamentary) language. The problem is one, not of talking to individuals, but of talking to capitalist 'individuals' in the language of Socialism. Power begins to dissolve as soon as it is grasped, says Mr. Fletcher: but what if it is not grasped? That question was not answered by James Ramsay MacDonald in 1924 and 1929: it was not answered by Clement Attlee in 1945 and 1950: it has not been answered by Harold Wilson in 1964 and 1966. But George Schwartz, the lively economic commentator of *The Sunday Times* (July 14), awarded Mr. Fletcher 'alpha plus for common sense' and for scraping off 'encrusted barnacles' from Labour ideology.

Mr. Ray Gunter was more cautious when explaining, also in *The Sunday Times* that day, 'How I Would Bring the Unions Into Line,' hedging each suggestion with a reservation, wherever possible. Nevertheless, the Government should lay down the rules by which settlements can be reached, before 'disruption in industry' begins. The Donovan Royal Commission on Trade Unions thinks there should be a few more years of experiment—'but I myself doubt whether we have the time.' Therefore, 'we ought to have some limited sanctions against unions which consistently misbehave, and we should have them now,' there ought to be an Industrial Relations Commission—'and it should have teeth.' The unions must co-operate with it (particularly as regards shop stewards), and if they don't, then the Government should 'push them into co-operation'— and thus 'ensure the existence of authority and discipline on the factory floor.'

This, too, is far from new. The employers have said it, the Tories have said it: what is new, perhaps, is that a former Labour Party chairman and ex-Minister of Labour has said it. It is also interesting to find him telling the Tories that he agrees with their view that 'the

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trade unions are very unpopular with the electorate.' Considering that the electorate, in round figures, numbers 35 million, while trade unionists, with their wives and husbands, alone number at least 18 million, without reckoning several million old age pensioners whom a *Socialist* policy would undoubtedly confirm on their side, and millions of wage-earners still waiting to be organised, it would appear that the electorate whom Mr. Gunter has in mind is that from whom his views on how to deal with the trade unions are derived.

An American Cousin

His views have a certain resemblance to those set out, once again by *The Times* (July 10), in an interview with an American attorney, Mr. Theodore W. Kheel, described as 'America's best-known and most successful labour mediator.' He thinks the British Labour movement antiquated, 'at least 35 years behind that of the United States'—where approximately one-fifth of the population live below the poverty line, with another one-fifth in a state of 'deprivation,' i.e. living below the official Bureau of Labour Statistics idea of a 'modest but adequate' budget (Hyman Lumer's *Poverty: Its Roots and Its Future*, produced by International Publishers in New York, gives an excellent survey of official data on this and other fields). What is needed, says Mr. Kheel, is 'rule by the majority,' which is 'basic to organised society'—but don't get him wrong: he doesn't mean rule by the working class majority over the capitalist exploiting minority. On the contrary, what he advises is to split up the working class majority. There should be an election held by the workers in each factory—but not in order to elect an all-in factory committee. It should ascertain which union gets 50 per cent or more votes: then that union would 'automatically' represent the lot, with all other unions excluded. If no union got 50 per cent, 'the plant remains non-unionised.' Then there should be binding contracts concluded by the (surviving) trade union with the employers, enforceable by the courts—and the British labour movement should no longer be 'tailored' to the shop stewards, 'who are too busy protecting their own personal power to obtain any real gains for the workers.'

The man holding such views, and upholding such practices, is—be it noted—called a mediator. One can well imagine the Confederation of British Industry or a Tory Government welcoming his services. And should readers of this journal hear them expounded

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by a Labour politician or ex-trade union leader, they too should take care to explain to the unregenerate and conservative working class that they came, not from a mouthpiece of the employers, but from a . . . mediator.

More about France

It seems very probable, too, that the capitalist press will do its utmost to muddy the waters by keeping up confusion about the events of May and June in France. Although de Gaulle once again managed to pull off a majority in the General Election, it was by no means the landslide that was at first proclaimed: just over 10 million for his party in the first ballot against over 9 million for the opposition, just under 6¾ million in the second ballot (when about 200 seats were no longer in the contest) against just over 6 million for the opposition. In getting his vote, de Gaulle used to the full the opportunity given him by anarchist provocation on one hand, police savagery on the other, to frighten the petty-bourgeois voter by assuring him that this is what voting for the Communists, or the left in general, would bring—an echo of the cry in the French elections after the first world war, that a vote for the Communists was a vote for 'the man with a knife between his teeth' (and lurid picture-posters rammed home the lesson).

But de Gaulle's biggest asset (as always in such circumstances) was the disunity of his opponents. This was not merely a question of political parties, but of classes. Without an alliance of the working class with the exploited majority of the peasantry and town petty bourgeoisie (which as it happens includes most of the fathers and mothers of the French students), no victory over the representatives of monopoly capitalism is possible in France—where the wage-earners and their families don't constitute the overwhelming majority of the population as in Britain. And while the working class stands firmly with the Communists, most of the other classes of working people follow various petty bourgeois or even bourgeois parties (May 24 was, incidentally, a day of peasant action in support of the general strike, when peasants set up road-blocks with their tractors in many agricultural areas). That is as hard and inescapable a fact as ever it was in Russia. For this reason, every day from May 14—the morning after the one-day general strike, which lifted the political crisis from the stage of fights between students and police to the stage when the entire class of workers by hand and by

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brain entered the struggle—the Communist Party leadership had publicly pressed the other left parties, and first of all the Federation headed by Mitterrand, for a meeting to agree upon the programme of a Left Government which would prove beyond doubt to *all* the oppressed working people of France that it was theirs. As Lance Samson pointed out last month, the pressure was backed by thousands of action committees formed all over France. Day after day, however, this meeting was avoided, and when it did come (on May 28) was left inconclusive. The reason? It was indicated with admirable clarity by the Political Bureau of the French Communist Party in its statement published on May 27: 'At the moment when the existence of a common programme would make possible the victory of the workers and all democratic forces, it is not comprehensible that politicians of the Left, while declaring that the situation is 'revolutionary,' should not respond to the proposal for an immediate meeting to adopt a programme of action which would make sense of the slogan of dissolution of the Assembly and new elections . . . The struggle for democracy and Socialism doesn't confine itself to satisfying the workers' demands, but it necessarily passes through that stage. No more than giving de Gaulle a blank cheque for him to fill in, shall we sanction any manoeuvre tending to substitute for the Gaullist power another government which would not satisfy the demands of the workers—on the pretext that they were out of date—which would keep the working class and its party out of the direction of the country's affairs, and would discredit the very idea of real democracy and Socialism.' This would be a return to the past—a reminder of the many times, during the last sixty years, that the French people had elected a majority which swore that its intentions were 'left': only to discover, once Parliament assembled, that they had been swindled. It was only when, on the 28th, the abortive meeting of the CP and the Left Federation had revealed that the latter was still avoiding such a definite commitment, while the unabated strength of the working class resolve was confirmed by the giant Paris demonstration on the 29th, that de Gaulle on the 30th ventured on his manoeuvre of dissolving the National Assembly, which he had hitherto resisted.

Of course there are some who attack the Communists for even thinking of elections when (they claim) there was a 'revolutionary situation'—ignoring all that Marx, Engels and Lenin, who knew what revolutions were, had ever said on the question. There were even some with the audacity to suggest that the Communists should have called

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on the workers to . . . boycott the elections, and come out into the streets in a fight to seize State power. The Editor of this journal last month answered these people, who take their desires for reality, and represent the up-to-date variety of what Lenin used to call 'the faction of loudest shouters.'

More about the Myths

Of course, also, the election outcome represents a set-back for the workers, the Communist Party and the wide social strata who pinned their hope of reforms to other parties. But the class struggle in France, which in the long run will be decided by the working class leading the other exploited sections, the students included, goes on: indeed, the capitalist press itself, explicitly as well as by implication, warns de Gaulle that this was only a preliminary round. Waldeck-Rochet, reporting to the Central Committee of the French Communist Party on July 8, aptly recalled the observations of Maurice Thorez, his predecessor as general secretary, after de Gaulle had won his stampede-election in 1958: 'We are in a war of classes, we must not forget it: and in this war of classes we don't only win victories. It has nowhere been written and proved that the struggle of the working class moves upward in an unbroken line of advance.' All the same, he had already pointed out, the great struggle of nine million workers occupying the factories had made substantial gains in wages, in hours, in extra holidays (notably for youth), in trade union rights within the factory, in pay for the period on strike. The General Confederation of Labour (CGT) had made 400,000 new members and set up thousands of new branches: the workers' care for the machines they controlled and the premises they occupied had been exemplary, worthy of a serious proletariat which intends to rule industry. (At the Renault works in Billancourt, on May 16, the pickets had turned away self-styled revolutionaries who had asked to be admitted, saying: 'We shall help you to smash everything up.') The Communist Party, which had gained 25,000 members in the first 4½ months of the year, up to May 13, made another 23,000 in the rest of May, June and the first week of July, less than 2 months.

Two or three corrections of anti-Communist myths may be usefully added to those listed in last month's issue by Lance Samson. 'That the Communists ignored the students, and the students eventually forced the unions and the Communist Party reluctantly to line up behind them.' At best a piece of illiterate propaganda: at

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worst a deliberate falsehood. Already in September 1943 the Communists had submitted to the National Council of the Resistance a detailed plan for the reform of the Universities. In 1947 two famous Communist professors, Langevin and Wallon, headed a committee which published an elaborate report on the necessary reform of the educational system. In 1968 itself, a few months ago, another programme of educational reconstruction was published, and given wide publicity. On May Day, the students' part in the demonstration had been underlined in the Communist press, and the student demands given full publicity day by day in *Humanité* thereafter with a daily call for workers' support of the students. *Humanité's* Sunday edition on May 5 reproduced the text of the Communist students' leaflet, circulated itself in 50,000 copies, setting out the main students' demands. On May 6 police action against the students had been denounced, and urgent measures to stop it demanded, not only in the press but by 50 Communist MP's of the Paris region in a deputation to the Ministry of Education. On May 7 the Secretariat of the CP called on the workers and teachers to demonstrate on behalf of the students for withdrawal of the police from the teaching institutions they had occupied, the reopening of the University faculty and the liberation of arrested students. This was all before the fighting during the night of May 10-11 which led, the next day, to the midday call of the CGT and other unions for the general strike of solidarity with the victims of police violence on May 13, the even earlier demand of the Political Bureau (at 6.30 a.m.!) for a special meeting of the Assembly, with a special issue of *Humanité* in 300,000 copies, and the 2 p.m. call of the CP Secretariat for the maximum support of the general strike.

Communists and Workers

'That the Communists were taken by surprise by the militancy of the workers and the occupation of the factories.' To Lance Samson's exposure of this lie, last month, may now be added the following. As someone wrote in *Humanité* on May 18—and, one may add, everyone acquainted even superficially with the history of large-scale industrial struggles can confirm—'It Was Not a Miracle.' Between March and May this year, there were 90 strikes in various parts of the Renault works. There were a flood of similar struggles in other big factories. In all these the initiative of the CGT and the Communist Party factory branches was perfectly well-known. The

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same applies to the huge series of strikes and popular demonstrations in Western France, Brittany and the Loire on May 8, in which at least 150,000 participated. The decisions of May 11 have already been mentioned. On the 14th one small Renault factory and an aircraft factory at Nantes were occupied by the strikers: it was on that day (the morning after the one-day general strike), not the 15th as at first thought, that the CGT issued 4 million copies of a leaflet calling on the workers: 'Assemble in your places of work and decide on your demands and your course of action. Act without waiting'—which anyone who knows the French workers must know was the nearest the CGT leaders could go in transparent advice to occupy the factories.

'That the leaders of the Communist-led CGT suffered a humiliating defeat when they laid terms of an agreement before the Renault workers.' No more brazen lie, counting on public ignorance of the facts, has been circulated. Here are the facts. On May 18, Séguy (general secretary of the CGT) stated that, if the Government decided to negotiate, the unions were ready: if they found that the Government was reckoning with their demands, they would return to those who sent them and ask whether it would be useful to resume work: 'the reply will depend on the scope of the Government's decisions.' Next day, in a radio interview, he repeated: 'If the Government accepts the demands, we shall return to the workers and ask them what they want done.' On the 26th the first meeting with the government and employers took place. Frachon, Chairman of the CGT, said in his opening speech that the results, and the guarantees offered by the Government, would be submitted to the workers, to enable them to decide. Séguy said that they were ready to sit without a break, 'until the conclusion of the discussion makes it possible at the earliest to consult the workers on strike.' On May 27 at 7.40 in the morning, Séguy had told the press that there was no question of ordering a resumption of work, and at 11 a.m. the CGT issued a communiqué saying that the delegation had refused to sign any text, and considered the offers inadequate. At a meeting of 27,000 Renault strikers presided over by the secretary of the CGT branch, Séguy had read out the Government offer clause by clause: some clauses were applauded, others hissed. The chairman then put the question to the vote, saying that all three unions represented recommended continuation of the strike. The vote was unanimous. Later that day, the CGT branch wrote to the leading capitalist newspaper, *Le Monde*, repudiating its story that Séguy had called on the workers

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to resume work: on the contrary, he had urged them to continue the strike. But the story had gone on its rounds, all over the world —to the great delight of the anti-Communists of all brands, who of course carefully refrained from noticing the denial.

And so Marx's observation in July 1871 (after the Paris Commune, appropriately enough) still holds good. Christian myths spread during the Roman Empire, it was thought, because printing had not been invented. 'Precisely the contrary. The daily press and the telegraph, which in a moment spreads inventions over the whole earth, fabricate more myths (and the bourgeois cattle believe and enlarge upon them) in one day than could have formerly been done in a century.' The pity of it is that, in a more literate world nearly a hundred years later, the bourgeois cattle have learned how to take in more innocent victims—especially those who hanker after a left reputation while keeping up an anti-Communist alibi.

A Field for United Action

Nevertheless, if the temptation to sectarian heckling can be kept in hand, there is another important field at home in which co-operation of all the left, both in the unions and in other fields is urgent and would be fruitful.

In June the Foreign Ministers of the Nato Powers assembled at Reykjavik to discuss the international situation. The outstanding problem in Europe—West Germany's continuing preparations for military aggression, and her continuing delay in signing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty—played no publicised part in the discussions. Instead, throughout their meeting, the publicity inspired by their press officer spoke of Nato being 'ready to enter into balanced force reductions in central Europe' (*The Times*, June 24) and their intention 'to publish a declaration calling on Warsaw Pact countries to consult on balanced force reductions' (*The Daily Telegraph*, June 25). Their final declaration said they 'agreed that it was desirable that a process leading to mutual force reductions should be initiated. To that end they decided to make all necessary preparations for discussions on this subject with the Soviet Union and other countries of Eastern Europe, and they call on them to join in their search for progress towards peace.' In the meantime (added *The Economist* on June 29), 'the military planners in Nato have been told to consider what reductions would be possible, granted some willingness by the Russians to pull back some of their own forces from Central Europe.'

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On July 8 the question came up in the House of Commons. 'Mr. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton, Lab.) said that the time had come to look again at Nato and the Warsaw pacts' (it may be remembered that by the first months of this year 180 MPs, mostly Labour but also some Liberals, had signed a motion advocating withdrawal from Nato and the conclusion of a European Security Treaty which would replace both pacts). 'Mr. Mulley (Minister of State for Foreign Affairs): Mutual force reductions are under study within Nato, and we hope to make progress in this regional and European disarmament field, as well as in the broader categories' (*The Times*, July 9, 1968). There was no word, this time, of approaching the Warsaw Pact countries.

What's Stopping them?

Yet they have repeatedly offered all the proposals made at Reykjavik, by the 180 MPs and by Mr. Mulley. At the conference of Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe held at Karlovy Vary in April 1967—the ruling parties of the Socialist countries took an active part—it was unanimously agreed (among other measures for disarmament and peace) to press for the following:

1. Agreement on partial measures of disarmament, including
   (a) withdrawal of foreign troops and bases from European States.
   (b) nuclear-free zones in Central Europe, the Balkans, the Danube countries, the Mediterranean area and Northern Europe.
   (c) creation of zones of reduced or 'frozen' armaments.
2. Winding up the Nato and Warsaw Pacts, to be replaced by a European Security organisation.
3. A conference of all European States, and representation of all European Parliaments, to discuss security and peaceful co-operation in Europe.

On June 27 Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, at the Supreme Soviet, declared that the Karlovy Vary proposals still held good, 'and await examination at the negotiating table.' He spoke particularly of the need to prepare a general European conference to discuss questions of security in Europe. 'The Soviet Government is ready to enter into appropriate contacts with those governments of

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European States who, for their part, realise the necessity and urgency of co-ordinating and uniting efforts for this purpose.'

Gromyko also proposed that the nuclear Powers should discuss, without participation by other states, an international convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons, and any other proposals for nuclear disarmament. A number of further proposals in this field were made in a Soviet Government memorandum on July 1, circulated to all governments on the occasion of the signature of the non-proliferation Treaty in Moscow, London and Washington. The memorandum also repeated proposals for regional cuts in armaments, nuclear free zones and dismantling foreign bases. It singled out the question of the 1925 Geneva Protocol on the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons—of particular importance at the present time, as we know.

Thus there is no lack of practical questions on which discussions are possible, if the Nato Powers want them—and if they are prepared to go beyond 'preparations' and 'study.' One has only to look at some of the proposals to realise that the time for these ponderous preliminaries is long since past.

Here is a field on which left and not-so-left and ultra-left, Communists, non-Communists and anti-Communists, could afford to set aside differences in order to co-operate in pressure on the British Government to make Mr. Mulley's hopes a reality.

Andrew Rothstein

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

The capitalists are not prepared to sink millions of pounds in rationalisation schemes to give the workers higher wages or the consumer lower prices. Their one aim is to keep the results of rationalisation for themselves by intensifying the output per individual worker on the one hand but by limiting the output for the industry as a whole thereby securing the maximum possible profit on a given volume of output. How absurd it is to suggest therefore that rationalisation is simply a scientific organisation of production in the interests of all classes of producers, of the workers, and of the consumers . . . Of course, it is argued that rationalisation is inevitable anyhow. That is correct, but that is all the more reason why the trade union movement should remain independent of capitalism and should concentrate on building up its economic strength, should fight against the evil results of capitalist rationalisation, and should emphasise to the workers more and more that the whole tendency of rationalisation under capitalism must be the worsening of their conditions if they do not develop their forces from a defensive fight inside capitalism to an offensive fight against the system itself.

(From 'The Fruits of Mondism,' by 'Trade Unionist,' *Labour Monthly*, August 1928.)

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COAL AND POWER

Will Paynter
General Secretary, National Union of Mineworkers

(We are pleased to print, with slight abbreviation, the remarkable valedictory address delivered to the Swansea Annual Conference of the NUM on July 1—Ed. LM.)

THE White Paper on Fuel Policy and the Coal Bill gives estimates of the expected demand for coal in 1971 and 1975. It gives estimates too of the expected development of North Sea Gas, nuclear power and fuel oil, as the fuel and power to replace coal. By 1971, the inland market for coal is estimated to be around 155 million tons, and this includes a boost of around 6 million tons by Government subsidy to the electricity generating industry. By 1975 demand is expected to fall to around 120 million tons annually—the boost being withdrawn in 1971.

The National Coal Board advises us that the manpower required to meet these estimates are around 275,000 in 1971 and 160,000 in 1975. These manpower forecasts are based on the continuation of the present rates of productivity increases. This means a reduction in manpower and of available jobs in mining areas of around 200,000 by 1975.

The gravity of this fall in manpower and jobs is in its social effects. It means the prospect of permanent unemployment for thousands of redundant miners over 55 years of age. Supplemented unemployment pay may lessen their material hardship, but it is no remedy for the loss of personal dignity and self-respect that springs inevitably from enforced idleness. Those of us who suffered unemployment in the 1930's know the humiliation and degradation of spirit that unemployment creates.

The adjustment of production to meet market trends and the Government estimates of future demand are now being ruthlessly operated. Since February 3, when closures were restarted after the winter suspension, 40 pits have already closed. Another 18 have their closure dates fixed—a total of 58 closure decisions. Added to this, there are another 44 pits which have been told that their future is in jeopardy. These, we know, are in the ante-room of closure.

This onslaught on the industry is understandably having a devastating effect on morale, on redundancies, on recruitment and re-

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deployment. The effects must be seen in their complete setting. When I came into this job in 1959, nine years ago, there were around 700,000 men employed, now there are around 350,000. Yet neither the union nor the men have been obstructive. We have recognised the changes taking place in fuel utilisation and in new sources of supply. We have co-operated in the development of technological innovation and concentration.

The present offensive in pit closures is not just a smack in the face to the union and its record of co-operation, it is inflicting mortal wounds upon the whole industry which has already had a decade of depression and contraction. It appears to us as if some malevolent force is hell-bent on creating industrial decay and social death in mining areas.

Since pit closures restarted the net manpower loss has been over 1,500 a week. This is an annual rate of 75,000, not 35,000 as the White Paper optimistically forecast. We have lost over 27,000 men since the beginning of the year. Voluntary leaving is between 500 and 600 a week. These are the younger men. In the eight weeks from April 1 to May 25 nearly 5,000 miners have been made redundant, most of them over 55. Recruitment has fallen to one-third of what it was this time last year and so has interdivisional transfers. What is going to be the effect of increased job opportunity arising from the expected up-turn in the economy? The manpower trends I have quoted will most certainly be intensified.

I warn that from an overproducing industry we face the danger of a crisis of underproduction. Before North Sea gas is piped in, in significant quantities, before the second nuclear programme is half way to completion, this nation can face a position where neither the pits nor men to man them will be available to supply the energy that an expanding economy will require. The industry is being so rapidly destroyed.

In the contracting coalfields the main job of providing alternative employment is for the older men and the disabled. Since the industry is discarding these men at a far faster rate than jobs are being provided, the harsh reality of job prospects for hundreds of these men can be cruelly put as a choice of wheel chairs or cemeteries.

We bitterly oppose the policy responsible for this catastrophic state of affairs. But let me make clear that our criticism of the Government's fuel policy, or perhaps, more correctly, absence of one, is in no way identified with a demand for a change of Government. No section of the British workers suffered more than the miners under

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Tory rule and they are the alternative to the present Government. No one, who lived through the 20's and 30's, as I did, would want to ever see them come to power again. But we must criticise and press for a change in this Government's attitude to the mining industry because we consider their policy to be grievously wrong to the miners and not in the best interests of the nation.

We criticise them because they have adopted the previous Government's approach of 'consumers' freedom of choice' as the basis of fuel policy, a basis which they condemned when in opposition. We want planning and not the anarchy of market forces. We consider that they are denigrating nationalisation in coal, gas and electricity in accepting that by 1975 55 per cent of Britain's fuel supplies—natural gas and oil—will be supplied by the big oil companies. Both the nationalised gas and electricity industries will depend for the main feedstock from private enterprise oil.

We consider that the published estimates of the price of nuclear power, already increased by 25 per cent since first made, are underestimates of what will be the reality in 1972 and later. We object that in the price comparisons being made no consideration is given to the costs, industrial and social, caused by the induced collapse of mining.

An independent examination of nuclear power costs is imperative and urgent and we urge the Government to act on this. We readily recognise that the discovery of natural gas in the North Sea is a boon to our national economy and must be exploited. We believe, nevertheless, that the plans for its extraction ought to be controlled in a fuel plan and used to reduce dependence upon imported fuel and not to displace native coal.

We are convinced that given market stability and a slowing down of pit closures the coal industry can give the nation fuel at acceptable prices. If we are not given this, I fear that the industry will decay more rapidly than is good for the economy of the country and certainly far more rapidly than this or any other Government can effectively deal with the social consequences.

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THE BRITISH RAILWAYS BOARD TAKES TO THE AIR

Dave Bowman

Executive Committee Member,
National Union of Railwaymen

THE first ever official railway trade unions' ban on overtime called by the National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen lasted exactly two weeks. This industrial action caused chaos on the railways and because of diversion of traffic brought about chaos on many roads.

After two weeks an agreement was reached between the British Railways Board and the unions. An increase of 10s. per week for the lower paid workers and a 3 per cent rise for the higher paid. This 'across-the-board' increase is certainly a defeat for the policy of the BRB and the Government, although there has been criticism on the railways, particularly by the lower paid workers, at the smallness of the wage increase.

Richard Marsh, the Minister of Transport, is on record as saying that 'the agreement is a victory for common sense.' Whose common sense? Certainly not the Government's or the BRB's. By no stretch of imagination can the conduct of the representatives of the BRB (in consultation with the Government) during the negotiations be called common sense. A recap. of the record will definitely prove that up to the hilt.

The Railway Staff National Tribunal made public its award (5s. and 10s. per week increase for only 60,000 railway workers) on Friday, June 6. Four days later both the NUR and ASLEF rejected the award and both declared industrial action in support of their wage claims, viz. a wage increase for all railway workers. Their members were instructed to work only the standard week, ban overtime, no rest-day working and to work to rule. The NUR also gave instructions to ban Sunday working.

On July 20 the BRB chairman, Sir 'Bill' Johnson, asked for the full national executives of the NUR and ASLEF to meet him and his Board at BRB headquarters. I have been to a number of these chairman 'lectures' in the past when there has been trouble brewing on the railways. I have heard Sir Brian Robertson and Sir Stanley Raymond both do it. They did it well but this one was the worst ever,

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dictatorial and empty of content. 'There would be no across-the-board increase. The Railway Staff National Tribunal had given its award and the unions must accept it. The prices and incomes criteria must be upheld. The Government would not intervene. They have told me so.' Not one phrase, not even a word, to try to meet or appreciate the unions' position. One NUR executive member wrote at the foot of his notes: 'Here endeth the lesson.'

Before this meeting there was a fair division on the NUR executive on the advisability of industrial action. After the meeting the vote to maintain action to win an increase for all members was overwhelming—20 votes to 3.

Both the NUR and ASLEF executives sat at their respective headquarters prepared for negotiations but the BRB maintained their rigid position. Discussions were held on the new wage structure between the unions and the BRB, and the millionaire press used these discussions to condemn the unions for not being flexible and tried to portray the BRB as enlightened employers presenting new proposals to solve the problem. Such a portrayal is entirely untrue. The BRB made no proposal to even try and meet the unions' main claim, an increase for all railway workers. As the last days of June passed and the industrial action began to bite—huge queues at railway stations and snarl-ups on the roads—both union executives were sitting only a fourpenny bus-ride from the BRB headquarters, but the BRB would not negotiate.

This snubbing of the executives laid bare the strategy of the BRB, abetted no doubt by the Government. The Annual General Meeting of the NUR was to meet at Penzance on Monday, July 1. It was quite openly said that once the militant National Executive of the NUR had their executive power taken over by the delegates to the AGM (the union's highest body) the BRB would be able to deal with the much less militant AGM. This strategy also had the added advantage that it might split the unity of the unions by isolating ASLEF.

It is now a matter of history that this strategy turned sour, and was a gross miscalculation. The AGM delegates at Penzance not only supported the NUR Executive's action but did so by the massive majority of 62 votes to 14.

Now the BRB and the Government had to move fast. Within hours of this decision a meeting took place attended by Barbara Castle, Minister of Employment and Productivity, Richard Marsh, Minister of Transport, Sir Bill Johnson, Chairman of the BRB,

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and Len Neal, manpower adviser to the BRB. Richard Marsh has denied that this foursome discussed new offers to solve the railway crisis. Then what did they meet for—to discuss the weather? It seems that at this *tête-à-tête* Sergeant Barbara ordered 'About Turn.' Certainly a qualitative change took place. Sir Bill Johnson who 'would never offer an across-the-board increase,' who told the unions 'the Government would certainly not intervene,' who would not call the union executives a fourpenny bus-ride away during the first week of the overtime ban, now took the unprecedented action of chartering an airplane to fly him with his negotiating team to Penzance. He even chartered another plane to take the ASLEF negotiators.

In Penzance there were tough negotiations lasting two days and two nights. The AGM delegates were not the meek little lambs as had been forecast. An across-the-board increase was won. Of course the aim is that these increases will be overtaken and included in the wage increases arising from the new wage structure and productivity agreement which it is hoped will be finalised before September 2.

It is certainly to be hoped that much bigger wage increases will arise from the new wage structure. The new wage increases of 10s. and 3 per cent make railway base rates £11 16s. at the bottom and £18 13s. at the top—absurd in present-day industry.

Those of us who have been engaged in the detailed work of the new wage structure know the immense difficulties involved. They have gone on for two years and five months already, and it is not the first time that dates have been set for the finalisation which have failed to mature. It is very doubtful whether the September 2 date will be any more realistic.

What is much more certain is that the BRB and the Government, like gamblers who have lost on the first race, will certainly aim to recoup their losses on the second, in the wage structure negotiations. It is equally certain that if the unions learn the lesson of Penzance they can also win the second round.

It was the industrial action which was biting hard into British transport that brought the BRB in haste to Penzance with the new offer, conceding an across-the-board increase. This added to the overwhelming support by the rank-and-file delegates for the National Executive's action, and the unity between the two unions determined the successful outcome. If this is remembered and a firm line taken railway wage rates can be brought into line with other British industries.

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THE ARTS TODAY

Edited by Stuart Douglass

A DECLARATION OF INTENT

by a university student

Maurice Cohen, aged 21, here making his declaration, was born in Liverpool and moved to London eight years ago. Now studying sociology at the University of Essex, having just finished the second year. A past member of the Students' Council at the University, he recently took part in the demonstration against germ warfare which led to the suspension of three students and the setting up of a Free University.

THE difficulty in trying to rationalise one's discontent as a student is that one is forced to look for arguments to logically explain it; but in doing this one presupposes that this discontent can be so rationalised, and one tends to view oneself as being unique as a 'rebellious' student of today. I think it is nearer the truth to argue that one can only rationalise to a certain extent, and that the question to be answered is not so much 'Why do I as a student in 1968 feel discontented?' but rather, 'Under what circumstances will any person feel discontented?'

The point that needs to be emphasised is that when one protests it is as much an emotional outburst as a rational one. One can, of course, rationalise a demonstration on a particular issue but in

Continued on page 362

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TIME PAST . . .

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Striking matchgirls at Bryant and May's, 1888

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TIME PRESENT . . .

Morning Star

Striking women machinists at Ford's, 1968

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opposing, for instance, the examination system, I find myself protesting against such abstract concepts as paternalism, authoritarianism, and the social system in general.

This leads to my second point which is that as a student I am not unique in that I protest, demonstrate, and rebel but the conditions under which any person or section of the community will feel discontented are present for me and for the student body as a whole. That is, that any group or person is likely to become discontented if the status they feel they ought to hold in society is, for no apparent reason, not met by their role in that society.

Thus, as a student today I find myself in an ambivalent position. On the one hand I am taught to analyse, criticise, and become an independent person, whilst on the other hand, having little effective say in what I am going to study, how I am going to study it, and in the running of the university in general. The major decisions affecting my life at the university are made, on my behalf, by a small group of senior academics and administrators who seem to think that they know what my interests are better than I do. I reject this as contrary to the principle of university education and feel that in an adult community, such as a university, all those affected by decisions made should have some say in the decision-making process.

Even at Essex, which is one of the more liberal universities in the country, the structure is much the same as that of most others. I feel strongly that it is not enough to make concessions to students within a power-orientated structure which puts decision-making in a few hands, but that the structure of the university itself must be changed in order to realise the true potential of all its members. A university, to me, should be a community in which each individual should be treated as an equal and thus, all its members are both students and teachers.

Being a student today is an exciting experience. Vietnam, Greece, and the disastrous policies of the Labour government have given a new urgency and militancy to the left-wing student protest movement on the political front; whilst within the universities the last-ditch attempts by some senior academics to preserve an antiquated structure have roused student consciousness to a new high level. If this enthusiasm can be channelled in the right direction and the student body can win the respect and co-operation of the working people of this country, then I think it possible that my generation of students will not go down in history as yet another generation of impatient and idealistic students.

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COLOUR AND CASTING

Peter Plouviez

Assistant General Secretary, British Actors' Equity

A YEAR AGO EQUITY PUBLISHED the results of a survey it had conducted into the earnings and employment of its members. This confirmed what most of those who were in any way connected with professional entertainment in this country already knew—that the majority of performers were grossly underemployed and underpaid. Fifty-one per cent of the men between the ages of 21 and 25 failed to earn £10 a week, and 54 per cent of performers over 65 were in the same boat.

Within a general situation of almost completely casual and insecure employment, the performer who faces some particular disadvantage is in an almost intolerable position.

It is indicative of the basic generosity of members of the acting profession that the overwhelmingly white membership of Equity should have considered it necessary to take a special interest in the employment situation of coloured artists and that they should be making an attempt to improve it.

There are probably some 200 members of British Equity who originally came from Africa, Asia or the West Indies. A relatively high proportion of these work mainly in light entertainment—as singers, dancers or club and cabaret artists. There is no evidence that coloured performers working in this field are at any disadvantage to their white colleagues (although, to their everlasting shame, a few so-called Working Men's Clubs operate a colour bar against both performers and members of the audience). Elsewhere, and particularly in drama productions in television, films and the live theatre, coloured performers face far greater difficulties in getting work than do their white counterparts. There are fewer parts available and these are frequently small so that the young and often fully-trained coloured actor is denied the opportunity of gaining experience in the practice of his art and thereby achieving a high standard of performance.

By and large, coloured actors are only cast in parts which are specified as 'coloured parts' by the author. Usually, and particularly in television, these parts are in plays with socially realistic themes. More and more talented coloured performers are becoming dissatisfied with a professional life limited to occasional appearances in 'Would You Let Your Daughter Marry One?' type of plays.

Although there are now a sizeable number of trained, young coloured actors leaving drama schools, the opportunities for them to go on to what is considered by many to be the most valuable post-graduate training an actor can have, in the repertory theatre, are infinitesimal.

In major cinema films employers frequently attempt to use American Negro artists in leading parts because they say that only a few resident coloured artists have the necessary experience. The British coloured actor is therefore in the vicious circle of being denied the occasional leading role in the most lucrative field because of his lack of experience, and at the same time being denied the opportunity to gain the experience because of the policy of those responsible for casting.

Equity has called for integrated casting, which means simply the

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casting of actors on the basis of their ability as actors and regardless of their racial origins. Equity has said that, although of course motivated primarily by its concern for the economic well-being of a minority of its members, it considers its policy is also clearly socially desirable.

When a majority of coloured people working in Britain are employed in fields of work where there is a shortage of white labour, it is inevitable that their presence tends to be accepted by the general public largely on the basis of their being employed in menial capacities.

It is, therefore, not very imaginative for casting authorities to think in terms of using a coloured actor to play a bus conductor or a road sweeper. Integrated casting, however, envisages more than the mere reflection of what is generally recognised to be an unsatisfactory social situation.

If people of different racial origins are to be successfully integrated, a far greater number of coloured people must soon perform jobs requiring a higher degree of skill, qualification and responsibility. If, in the casting of plays, this process is anticipated and accelerated, then resistance to the increased employment of coloured people in higher level jobs may be reduced and the positive acceptance of them may become easier.

Equity has said that the chances of a coloured actor being considered for the part of, say, a bank manager or a chartered accountant in a play which has no racial connotations are, if anything, even more remote than the chances of a suitably qualified coloured person actually getting work as a bank manager or an accountant.

In the United States, the performers' unions have had some success in persuading producers and casting directors to consider Negro actors for roles not specifically identified as coloured by playwrights.

Equity has started a round of talks with the various employers' associations here and already some progress has been made.

In the Royal Shakespeare Company, for instance, two young coloured actors are currently employed and are getting the opportunity of playing a wide range of parts. At the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, recently a coloured actor played a leading role in a play which had been successful in the West End with an all-white cast. Johnny Sekka had a personal triumph at the Hampstead Theatre Club recently playing a part that could just as well have been played by a white actor.

The resistance to integrated casting is considerable. Not because employers in entertainment are racialist, but because on the whole they are timid and terrified of departing from long-established patterns.

Equity believes that entertainment generally, and the mass media in particular, can play a vital role in what is probably the most important area of contemporary social development.

WHAT HAPPENED TO HANCOCK

Tony Selby

SOMEONE SAID, What do you think about Hancock? I said, Eh? You mean Tony. He said, Yes, wasn't it terrible, who would have thought it? Surely, I said, quite a few people. You're joking, says he, he had everything. He had nothing, said I.

Now don't get me wrong. I don't

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mean that he didn't have talent, he had that in abundance. That is why we are all talking and writing about the death of this man Tony Hancock. When I say he had nothing I mean it in this sense: when the man tried to explore his craft as a craftsman he was already moulded as a certain star performer and he couldn't find a direction or goal to go for. As far as you can go is to be a star, and *that's it*, if you've been captured.

Where can I go, said Hancock, Miss Monroe and many others before them. Different people, different talents, but with the same problems in the same set-up. In the Soviet Union one could end up in the nick or something, says the fellah. Oh yes, says I, but there's nobody here who cares enough to take you there, so you take a few Jack and Jills and maybe someone will find you in time and they'll put you back on your feet with a few more lollipops of the showbiz world you belong to.

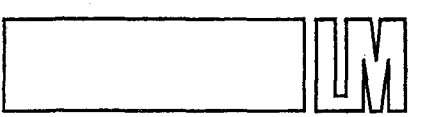
But to be fair to poor Hancock, I don't think a few more lollipops would have saved him. The system made him believe it all, fooled him, confused him and finally beat him. Oh, he knew there was something wrong, he was a sensitive man. That's why he became a victim. He punished himself, but the rules were made by others. If he'd tumbled it, like the great comedy writers who blended with his own fine talent a wonderful communication to the masses, he would have survived.

First, other artists worried him because of their talent, then the writers were identified with the success of his work, so it was the chop for it all. A star can stand up alone. Why? The material was perfect for his talent, he was supported by talented professional fellow-actors and the public adored it all, with him at the top of it all. But it wasn't enough. He was born into that era of showbiz, particularly variety, that says, 'You're the greatest, it's *your* show, you don't need anything or anyone with your talent. You can do it, son, all on your tod, go it alone and be the biggest star.'

He was constantly quoted in the press in his last couple of years that he was looking for change. This need for change and getting away from the old format—you see, he nearly found out.

This was not Hancock's problem alone. It is thrown out day and night, fresh off the production-line of Establishment education, to every kid with talent, whatever trade, profession or career he wants to pursue. Have your own business, kid, don't just be a good plumber, have your own shop. Don't just be a bleedin' marvellous actor, be a star on your own. Don't just lay good bricks, own your own building firm and make a fortune.

There is only one obituary to dear old Tone and that's to stop his kind of pain and misery. So don't believe it all when they hand out the medals. If you believe it all, they'll have you like they had him. Try to understand it all just long enough to ask 'Why?' It's long enough to think, and if it's long enough to think, it's long enough to *live* and not *die*.



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VIETNAM—A VOICE FROM SWEDEN

Olof Palme

(*The failure of the Wilson Labour Government to voice the universal popular protest against the American war of aggression in Vietnam was sharply emphasised when a leading Cabinet Minister of the Swedish Social Democratic Government, Hon. Olof Palme, Minister of Education, widely described in the Swedish press as the coming Prime Minister, addressed a gigantic demonstration against the war in Vietnam on February 21. The United States Minister was recalled to Washington in consequence. The text of the speech which gave rise to this diplomatic incident is such a remarkably clear statement of the elementary facts about the war in Vietnam and the grounds for opposition that it may be useful for the main passages to be made available for our readers—Ed. LM.*)

DEMOCRACY is a demanding form of government. It demands respect for others. One cannot force a form of government upon a nation from the outside. The people must have the right to determine their own future at their own discretion. Democracy thus presumes national self-determination. Democracy's ends can never be accomplished with the means of oppression. One cannot save a village by destroying it—nor by burning fields, demolishing houses, imprisoning people or killing them. Democracy demands justice. A people cannot be won by filling the pockets of the rich while the poor are driven deeper and deeper in their need. Demands for social justice cannot be answered with violence and military force.

These are starting-points for the evaluation of the war in Vietnam. This war is no fortuitous aberration. It has a long history during which events have unfolded with frightening logic. Three dates are worth special emphasis in this chain of events. The first is 1945.

Vietnam was a French colony. It was conquered by the Japanese in their attempt to create an Asian empire. The Japanese were defeated. But the concept of the white man's superiority had been shaken. When the French sought to regain their colony, they were met by a people who demanded national self-determination. The resistance movement in the war against Japan became the nucleus in a movement that demanded freedom from all foreign invaders. It derived inspiration from the American Declaration of Indepen-

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dence. The movement relied upon the support of the United States in its demand for independence. They believed they had been given promises of such support. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was proclaimed.

But the colonial power decided to re-establish its rule with violence. And the United States decided to side with the French. Thus began the war in Vietnam, a war against foreign invaders. It is this war which is still going on. The French and their local allies lost. They lacked the support of the people. The fighting spread to larger and larger portions of the country. The United States stepped in to help. By the beginning of the 1950s, the Americans were probably paying 70-80 per cent of the French war costs. But that did not help. At Dien-Bien-Phu the dream of a French colonial empire came to an end. And in Geneva negotiations for peace were begun.

With that we reach the second date: 1954. On July 20, 1954, a truce in the war in Vietnam was agreed upon. The country was provisionally divided. But it was a temporary, militarily determined demarcation line. After two years—in July 1956—free elections under international control were to take place throughout the country. Subsequently, the country was to be united.

The United States has opposed the Geneva agreement. The United States refused to sign the agreement. No free elections took place. Vietnam remained divided. Instead, the United States expressed a desire to build up a strong democratic alternative in South Vietnam. Organisational help and enormous amounts of money were invested in this alternative.

The government in Saigon that obtained the support of the United States combined a dictatorship's brutal persecution of people holding different opinions with complete contempt for simple demands for justice regarding the social and economic conditions of the people. Land reform was discussed. Viet Minh had given land to the peasants. But it is said that the old landowners and moneylenders accompanied the soldiers who claimed to be coming to liberate the villages. For the peasants it was not liberators that came. It was their old oppressors.

Thus the government in Saigon lost the support of the people. There is nothing to contradict the statement that, when the fighting flared up anew, it was essentially a question of a spontaneous popular revolt against a corrupt and hated regime.

Just as things went badly for the French, things went badly for the government in Saigon. The people were starving and corruption

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flourished. The United States intervened to a greater extent. Escalation began. A few instructors became numerous, became units, became divisions, became large bodies of troops composed of hundreds of thousands of men. The most powerful war machine in the world began to exert all its efforts to suppress the opposition in this country. But nevertheless things went badly.

With that we reach the third date, February 1965, just about three years ago. Then the bombing of North Vietnam was started. War was not declared. It has still not been declared. More bombs have been dropped on North Vietnam during these three years than were dropped on Nazi Germany during World War II. We know how much material devastation and individual suffering this means.

Because of this we feel alarm, compassion, despair. But feelings can hastily flare up and just as rapidly disappear if they are not held by motivation and circumstances. Thus we should know that all of this individual suffering is the bitterly logical consequence of an erroneous and deeply unjust policy which has been pursued for 20 years.

North Vietnam is ready for negotiation if the bombing is unconditionally stopped. This is why a growing international opinion has persistently and with greater and greater strength united in an appeal to the United States. Stop the bombing of North Vietnam unconditionally. Recognise the NLF as an equal part at the peace table. Only then will there be negotiations. Then there can be peace. Then there can be national self-determination for the people of Vietnam. It should be obvious to all of the governments of Europe that it is their duty to give expression to this with force and decisiveness.

Thus we see that facts and an appraisal of the situation can lead us to certain conclusions. The United States maintains that it is a question of defending the democratic rights of the people of Vietnam against foreign invaders. But if one is going to speak of democracy in Vietnam, it is obvious that it is represented to a much greater degree by the NLF than by the United States and its allied junta.

This is an assertion, based on facts. The foremost criterion of democracy is of course the support of the people. No one denies that in 1945 Ho Chi-minh had the support of the people against the French colonial power. No one denies that the Viet Minh would have won an overwhelming victory at the free elections that should have been held in 1956 according to the Geneva agreements. President Eisenhower has stated that Ho Chi-minh would have certainly

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obtained 80 per cent of the votes. It was of course for this reason that there were no elections.

Furthermore, no one denies that the Diem regime which was set up in Saigon to represent the so-called democratic alternative became intensely detested by the people. It was overthrown in 1963 and is mourned by no one. Still further, no one wishes to maintain that the present junta actually bases its position on the support of the people. It is an established fact that corruption, inefficiency and indifference to social demands are greater than ever. A regime that needs the help of 500,000 American soldiers to survive for one day has the people against it.

The opinion against the war in Vietnam is a hopeful and gratifying sign, not only for peace and freedom in Vietnam but also from a wider perspective. It is an international solidarity movement that is not founded on narrow self-interest, but relies on responsibility, a feeling of common duty, the will for brotherhood in practice (not lip-service). Thus it aims at the future in a constructive sense. It represents the interests of humanity.

Sometimes it is said that Europe supports the United States' war in Vietnam. It is stated that it is only small groups that are driven to resistance by a fanatical hatred of America. This is not true. The truth is that the overwhelming majority of the people in Europe reject this war, want to end the suffering, want to give the people of Vietnam the right to determine their own future. This democratic opinion does not see the United States' war in Vietnam as a support for democracy, but as a threat to democracy, not only in Vietnam but throughout the world. That is why Vietnam is not far away. Its people are near to us. These people must at last obtain peace and independence.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION

R. Page Arnot

IN the past Royal Commissions were often set up in order to rescue a government from an awkward situation, and particularly when it was expected to do something whereas it wished to postpone a decision. To stifle discussion the whole matter was referred to a Royal Commission and so became *sub judice*. Its report, produced when the storm had dwindled to a calm, would then be pigeon-holed and never referred to again until the Greek Kalends. Actually,

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Royal Commissions are of the most various kinds. They can be everything from a temporary inquiry into a particular small problem to a kind of engine of Government such as the 50-year-old still functioning Royal Commission on Sugar Supplied or to take a still longer-lived example, the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. The Royal Commission, it is true, therefore is an instrument of Government. The question is, what sort of instrument is it? How was it set up? What aim does it seek to achieve? This particular Royal Commission* demanded originally by the Tories yielding to pressure, not only of pot-valiant clubmen in Pall Mall but also of others more important, caused at that stage some little apprehension in the Labour Movement at a time when the House of Lords was making inroads into the legal defences of trade unionism. These earlier fears have turned out to be groundless. Nevertheless the Royal Commission is a document of the utmost importance, to be scrutinised with the jealous attention, not only by every trade union official, but in particular by every shop steward as well as by the workers on the floor whom he or she represents. For this Royal Commission is set up to rescue a government from an awkward situation of a different kind in which it fervently wishes to do something at the earliest possible moment but requires first this peculiar preliminary array of witnesses and arguments before it can proceed with any hope of success. In fact Barbara Castle, the minister responsible for doing something, has to hesitate like Macbeth:

> Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would',
> Like the poor cat i' the adage.

The terms of reference of this Royal Commission were 'to consider relations between managements and employees and the role of trade unions and employers' associations in promoting the interests of their members and in accelerating the social and economic advance of the nation, with particular reference to the Law affecting the activities of these bodies.' It might seem that this was a pretty wide terms of reference and gave them wide scope. Actually, the Commissioners have interpreted their task rather narrowly. They have in their report made the very briefest reference to the past, to the last Royal Commission on trade union matters of over 60 years ago or to the whole developments since in this country. Yet this survey would have made their standpoint more intelligible and their authority much greater.

* Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, 1965-1968, Cmnd. 3623, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, £1 net.

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They start with a reference to Beatrice Webb. This itself is no mistake. The work of the Webbs over a period of nearly a decade consisted in a sociological inquiry into the same matters as are in the terms of reference and rather more besides. This task made it necessary for them to examine what had led up to the situation existing before their inquiry and for this purpose they wrote *The History of Trade Unionism.* A generation later again an Inquiry into the Control of Industry (initiated by Beatrice) assembled in the Fabian Research Department, afterwards to become the Labour Research Department, an immense body of information and a series of studies covering similar ground to this Royal Commission and going considerably further. This was carried out apart from the three arch-Fabians Bernard Shaw and Sidney and Beatrice Webb, by William Mellor, C. M. Lloyd, G. D. H. Cole, Maurice Reckitt, and a whole number of others in a vast voluntary organisation.

The present Royal Commission steers clear of any such interpretation of its function: and, of course, it need hardly be said that a complete inquiry would enter into the deeper underlying problems of society including the relation to the democratic advance and to the struggle to win a socialist society. This, naturally enough, is left out by such a body as the present commission. Nonetheless, it will be for all those who look forward to Socialism to take note of these contradictions of Capitalism in this later 20th century, and to survey the long tussle between the classes within the continued endeavour to bring trade unions into the machinery by which the capitalist state may carry out the purposes of the great monopolies.

The purpose then of the present Royal Commission of Trade Unions and Employers' Associations as it has operated over the last three years has been a very narrow one but, from the point of view of those who appointed it, an extremely urgent one. It is quite simply to deal with the problem, intractable so far both for the capitalists and for successive governments, of the control of incomes within each factory or company. It is the inexorable, the iron barrier to the free manoeuvring alike of financial wizards and anxious Treasury officials. In terms of persons it is the problem of relations between managers and shop stewards in industry. The national trade unions tend no longer to control the movement of weekly earnings. It is the old problem of supply and demand, but in a new context. This is very clearly put as the context which has arisen in these last thirty years.

The period between the wars was not only one of the greatest

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possible suffering and misery for the working class of Britain but also one in which employers' profits flagged or actually diminished. The attempt to overcome this impasse by a 'controlled'inflationwhich would lead to 'full employment' brought new dilemmas. In the 'stop-go' period since the end of the war frustrations increased. The wage freezes might be accepted by national conferences of trade union executives: but not by the men and women in the workshops, who gave them a dusty answer. Thus the purposes of governments, themselves subserving the interests of the big monopolies have been in the end thwarted by the economic pressure of the organised working class on a factory and district basis.

Collective bargaining, the phrase of Beatrice Webb, is really the subject of this Report. 'The decentralisation of collective bargaining has taken place under the pressure of full employment' which as they say, 'encourages bargaining about pay at the factory and workshop levels.' If there is a tendency towards a shortage of skilled workers, what then? There may be honour amongst thieves: but amongst employers there is no question that they will compete with one another in offering higher wages to get the higher profits. It is this in-built tendency which has produced the present situation.

Another statement makes it clear that the Royal Commission was set up because the Wilson Government in its first months of office became aware of problems beyond the scope so far of the Prices and Incomes Board. So this Report concludes that 'sooner or later full employment leads to incomes policy,' and in paragraph 157 goes on to state:

> 'In Britain we have had a series of incomes policies since 1948, when the post-war Labour Government called for a period of restraint, most of them concerned almost exclusively with restricting the rate of increase of wage and salary rates. Experience over the last three years, however, has demonstrated that restricting rates is not enough. Earnings rise faster than rates, so that the policy-makers have become increasingly concerned with the agreements and methods of payment in the factory'.

So this commission's business is to examine the grass roots of trade unionism and see if it be possible to tear them up and plant them in what may seem a better order. This leads it to survey the whole of factory industrial relations, and in particular, how to deal with shop stewards who are the democratically elected and closest representative of the workers. Political philosophers who for generations held the direct participation and voting of Athenian free men to be the purest

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and most exalted kind of democracy can find a very similar example here amongst the British wage-slaves. So the Commission sets out to tackle 'the reform of collective bargaining' which, at any rate within the workshops, is now too democratic for their taste, too democratic for company directors to stomach and too democratic for the Ministry of Labour (of blessed memory!). But the Commissioners do not assail the use of democracy or the idea of it. They prefer the neutral terminology invented or at any rate used by the Ministry of Labour.

Amongst geographers, meteorologists and oceanographers for many years the Gulf Stream has been rejected as the name of that movement in the waters that warm our Western shores. They prefer to call it the North Atlantic Drift. Similarly the Ministry's *Labour Gazette* has for these past many issues given table after table to show the growing gulf between rates of wages and weekly earnings: and on this difference over recent years they bestow the climatological term 'Drift.' Before the war there was only a modest gap between time rates of wages for a normal week and average earnings of an adult male manual worker. But since the war and, it appears, particularly during the period of the Wilson administration there has been a process of divergence between the two, or as they call it, 'Drift.' This is ascribed to 'a remarkable transfer of authority in collective bargaining' from national negotiators to factory bargaining which 'can be more momentous.'

What troubles them most of all is that there is no means of keeping any knowledge of what's happening, let alone controlling it. The attempt to clamp down by wage freeze on incomes (with little done so far on prices) has resulted, in certain export-trades, in an uncontrollable, ungovernable, almost oceanic drift of earnings to something well beyond the rate of wages. What are they to do? It is proposed that this be brought under control and that everything be better regulated. Therefore, not only must there be reforms or at any rate changes on the employers' side, and also reform of trade union constitutions, but above all new machinery of government for the purpose of having over-riding control of industrial relations. So it is proposed that there be a new law to increase the powers of the Department of Employment and Productivity, with which all collective agreements (to begin with of companies with over 5,000 employees) must be registered in fully written-out form: and to set up an Industrial Relations Commission as a 'completely new permanent institution.' While the Registrar of Friendly Societies

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is to be given certain powers over all trade unions, another new Act of Parliament is to compel arbitrators 'to take incomes policy into account'—which seems to make a mockery of independent arbitration.

Furthermore, a new model for collective bargaining in future would be a 'productivity agreement' between each giant factory (or company) and its employees, represented both by shop stewards and district officials. Factory or company agreements of this kind developed for the first time in the USA. Significantly it was one of the Standard Oil companies, the multiple spearhead of monopoly as developed in this century, the Esso refinery at Fawley in Hampshire which gave a first big example in Britain of this new 'productivity' bargaining. To this model both employers and workers should conform in future. Will Paynter, General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, immediately noted these Royal Commission proposals and denounced any tendency to break up into district and company agreements the century-old endeavour of trade unions (most of all, perhaps, in coal mining) to win a common rule, an overall standard rate, and regularity of hours and conditions. Though the working day was finally made uniform throughout the coalfields in this century, conditions, payments, concessionary coal, etc., etc., all remained 'autonomous and fragmented.' This caused an inequality, an unfairness which it has been the object of Paynter and others for many years to overcome.

So far what we have been dealing with is clearly the main purpose of the Report, to find a solution for problems of finance and of industry that for twenty years have beset the governments of this country. There are however many additional facets of this Report. For example, they are not so worried as the millionaire press with strikes which they realise are fewer than in most other comparable countries but that 95 per cent of the strikes are 'unofficial': but this they hope to deal with as part of their 'reform of collective bargaining' and by new trade union rules for the election of shop stewards. Of great importance also are proposals for consolidating existing laws on trade unionism, which too might have a bearing on 'unofficial' strikers. But these legal proposals must be the subject for separate treatment. A further extension of the Royal Commission's work was in a series of research papers to buttress the enormous evidence assembled before they reached their conclusions.

These included investigation in two European countries, Sweden and West Germany, as well as taking examples from across the

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Atlantic. There is no suggestion at all that it would have been helpful for their purpose to have gone to the USSR there 'to consider relations between managements and employees.' Problems exist in Soviet industry, economic problems, industrial problems. Such an investigation would have shown that the removal of Capitalist ownership and control of engineering and allied industries would then furnish fairly easy solutions along lines acceptable both to management and to the trade union committees in each factory, as well as to the national unions and the national interests.

But this over-riding solution was precluded. For no one, not even Barbara Castle nor any other within the Labour Government who would claim to be a Socialist, had any expectation that a Royal Commission, even if set up by a Labour Government and composed of representatives both of capitalists and trade unionists, would yield any such result—'any more than you can get fried eggs out of a sewing machine,' as Bernard Shaw wrote once in this magazine. It was made for another purpose. Therefore, there would have been no point from the standpoint of the Commissioners in investigating anything beyond parallel capitalist countries like Britain itself: and the 'permanent hypothesis' that capitalism will continue in Britain runs right through this Royal Commission Report from beginning to end.

THE MESSAGE IS — FIGHT!

John Ball

THE recent spate of industrial disputes have not been in the main the sort of tempestuous battles that make the welkin ring. For one thing, Government policy has been to beat a retreat in the face of workers determined enough to take it on in full view of the electorate. Take the Liverpool busmen. In April, after an 11-week strike, they were given the go-ahead by the Prices and Incomes Board for a rise estimated to add 31s. a week to their earnings. Commented *The Sunday Times*:* 'The message to other unionists is clear—if you want an increase there's nothing like a good, old-fashioned bit of industrial action to get results.' Very perceptive. And the point was underlined again when the Ford women machinists got their cups of tea from Mrs. Barbara Castle, and gave her very

* 26.5.68. An article by Eric Jacobs, a former P.I.B. Press Officer.

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little sympathy in return—until they were assured of a sizeable pay rise and a public hearing for their grading claim. Then again, the 62-14 vote of the National Union of Railwaymen at Penzance (endorsing their executive's militant stand) was the point at which the big sticks—40,000 lay-offs, etc.—were put away in the cupboard by Mrs. Castle. The Government has made it quite clear that the one thing it cannot risk or afford is to have its incomes policy publicly defied and beaten. It has, therefore, to avoid a showdown at all costs if its credibility (which still takes a trick with some leaderships) is to remain anything like intact. Thus a series of 'accommodations' have been reached, with the Government finding that retreat is the better part of valour—and there is a growing list of quietly allowed 'productivity' pacts, to take care of key workers in important firms.

But if recent disputes have not all set the Thames on fire, neither have they been without significance. In fact they have a unique quality which might well point to the character of future industrial battles. The roll-call of trade-unionists-in-action includes, for example, bank clerks, busmen, engineers, draughtsmen, Post Office counter clerks, Ford women machinists and railwaymen. And seldom can so varied a cross-section of workers from the TUC's 19 groups have been linked together by the single bond of industrial action to win their demands. For the Post Office clerks, for example, it was their first-ever taste of industrial action.

To find such groupings united together in their use of collective action might not mean that the revolution is round the corner, but it does indicate that growing sections of the Labour movement are now willing to drop their old reticence about taking such action, and are prepared to call the Government's bluff and show that they too have industrial teeth that can bite.

Production workers, white-collar workers, women workers, civil servants. And using the most varied forms of battle: from the all-out strike of the 380 Ford women and the 4,000 Liverpool busmen, to the short, sharp but mounting strikes of the bank and Post Office clerks; to the solid one-day national strike of the three million engineers, the intense local action of the draughtsmen, and the work-to-rule and ban on overtime and Sunday work of the railwaymen. And not one of them lost out. The counter clerks got their immediate date for their Treasury pay offer and safeguarded their back-dating arrangements; the bank-clerks secured national negotiating rights for a whole series of topics which were previously outside

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the machinery; the Ford women (of more 'blessed memory' than Ray Gunter's Ministry of Labour) immediately secured a substantial pay rise; the draughtsmen won a new national agreement in engineering with rises from 9-23½ per cent; the railwaymen won the right to an all-round increase and parried the threats from the Government; the engineers showed the solidity with which their members respond to leadership from the top—in the face of a struggle which is still largely to come.

When was such widely-varying proof last available, in so compact a time span, that determination and a refusal to be side-stepped, hoodwinked or brow-beaten, pays dividends? And could the demonstration have come at a more opportune time—when the combined state and monopoly onslaught on living standards is reaching its climax?

For the Government is not going to let up or give up. It has suffered set-backs, but it has only withdrawn when forced to—and then usually behind an elaborate smoke-screen to stop the word getting around that it is not invulnerable. And it remains a fact that had the Ford women, for example, showed signs of weakening at the crucial time they would have been eased back to work with nothing to show for their magnificent walk-out.

Since the Declaration of Intent was signed in December 1964, the Government has used the full apparatus of the State (and expanded it where necessary) to intervene in the traditional collective bargaining between unions and employers. Its aim, more clearly seen than ever since the report of the Royal Commission on Trade Unions appeared, is to exercise the maximum possible control over every single pay bargain (using the term pay to cover all demands which encroach on the employers' profits, whether concerning hours of work, holidays or working conditions). Cashing in on the goodwill in the trade unions towards a Labour Government, and the refusal of some right-wing leaderships to fight their members' claims through as they ought, the Government has succeeded to a degree in its attack on living standards. Now proclaimed, following devaluation, is the aim of cutting everyone's standards across the board.

Left-wing Labour MPs have fought hard against the Prices and Incomes Bill—and have gone into the 'No' division against it. But it goes ahead, with its slim parliamentary majority and the certainty that it will be hated and fought in the workshops. The recent disputes up and down the country augur well for the fight that is coming. And the message they bring is simply—fight!

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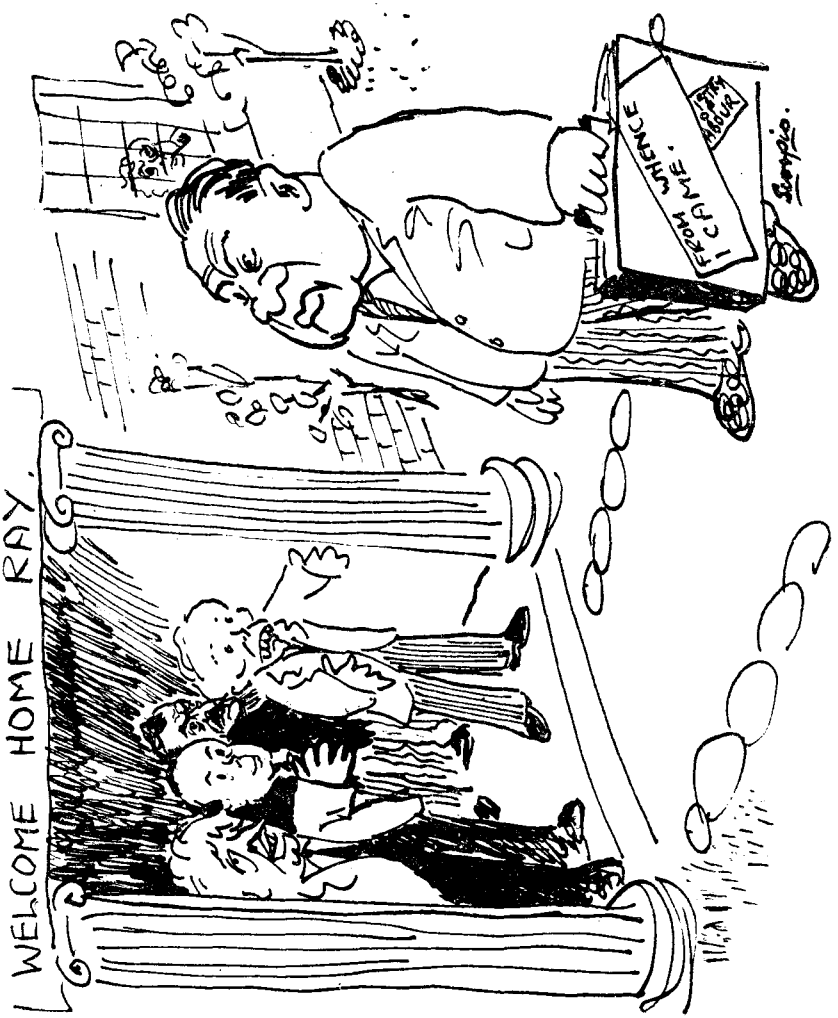

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BOOKS

Reap the Whirlwind
Geoffrey Bing
MacGibbon & Kee, 520 pp., 63s.

Dark Days in Ghana
Kwame Nkrumah
Lawrence & Wishart, 164 pp., 12s. 6d.

THE FIRST OF THESE BOOKS, bearing the sub-title: 'An account of Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana from 1950 to 1966,' is the work of a barrister, a historian, and a knowledgeable politician, who spent a large part of the sixteen years covered by the book in Ghana, in various important posts. He has not merely made use of his qualifications and his local experience, but has also studied the already large volume of literature which surrounds those pregnant years of the life of a variety of African peoples who find themselves—like so many other Africans—thrown together, in a sense at random, within political frontiers fixed, regardless of ethnic or any other considerations of their own, by past invasions and the conflicts of rival Imperialists. (Indeed, if Nkrumah had been born into another family of the same tribe a few miles west of his actual birthplace, he would have been educated in French, would have liberated the Ivory Coast, and would have suffered a stream of abuse and misrepresentation from a different set of Imperialist newspapers.)

Even with Mr. Bing's advantages, it was a difficult task, even in a pretty long book, to give an account of the sixteen years; he has attempted to achieve it by writing accounts of a series of important episodes which, taken together, give a good picture, even to an ignorant reader, of a complicated period in the lives of the various peoples involved; and the book is seasoned by some interesting personal experiences, and still more by a neat wit.

The three final chapters—'The last years,' 'The non-political army,' and 'The Harvest'—are the most interesting, for they deal with the events which most readers will be most eager to understand; and they are, naturally, events which have suffered even more acutely than might have been expected from distortion and suppression in the day to day accounts given by government sources and the Press. But the earlier chapters are valuable, and the book as a whole has three outstanding merits. Dealing with them in inverse order of their importance, I find that the first lies in a good defence of Mr. Bing himself against some of the wilder—and fantastically wild—press accusations made against himself; the next lies in the excellent defence of Nkrumah against the innumerable and very largely baseless accusations levelled against him by the Press throughout almost the whole period of his rule. From this discriminating and convincing defence there emerges a most sympathetic picture of Nkrumah as a man, which corresponds exactly to my own estimate of him, formed on a much more limited personal experience. The third, and by far the most important, merit of the book lies in the vivid picture given, often by a mere bald recital of events, of the fundamental evil of Imperialism as it was applied in Ghana (not very different, no doubt, from its application elsewhere in Africa and the world). Even the most case-hardened student of Imperialism gets a new or renewed view of its all-pervading wickedness, of its combination of foresight where profit and the retention of power are concerned and myopia for everything

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that does not serve either of those aims, of its unwillingness or incapacity to recognise the existence of any interest or point of view other than its own, and of its mixture of cunning and stupidity, rapacity and meanness, and of the fashion in which, in particular, its innumerable and mostly second-rate officials half-neglected and half-sabotaged the ostensible preparations for independence, thus giving neo-colonialism—the mad dog returning to its own vomit—every chance of establishing itself on the ruins of genuine African self-government, and above all, with the enthusiastic help of a Press which has to be seen to be disbelieved, guaranteeing exploiters against the possibility of a 'liberated' country taking the Socialist path and ending their profitable piracies.

The second book, by the great man who brought Ghana to independence and was its President and leader until the military coup d'état of February, 1966, covers in part the same ground. It deals with the coup itself, discussing among other things the outside influences which worked to bring it about, and gives accounts—derived from Nkrumah's own sources within Ghana—of the rule of the group calling itself the 'National Liberation Council' which at present governs the country, and of the fate under its rule of the people of Ghana, showing their loss of the many benefits they had begun to enjoy under Nkrumah in such fields as education, industrial and agricultural development, and in roads, ports, and electric power.

The author defends extremely well his own rule and activities in Ghana, and—which is much more important—explains the failures and difficulties with which he had to cope, due largely to the shortage of skilled administrative and technical personnel, which often involved, in the absence of trained people who could replace the inadequate cadres, the retention in high posts of inefficient and untrustworthy officials, and the impossibility of rooting out corruption with an unreliable investigating and police apparatus. Most important of all, Nkrumah gives, as Mr. Bing does, a vivid picture of the all-pervading ill-effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

The book is lively and optimistic for the long run. D. N. PRITT.

Middle-class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Frank Parkin

Manchester University Press, 208 pp., 35s.

A CURRENT CONVENTION of academic 'political sociology' (the term chosen by its exponents) is to take some political phenomenon, dissect it like a frog under the microscope on the basis of tabulated answers to questionnaires and percentage calculations, and on this basis offer conclusions, without any understanding of the political issues involved or the political history and development of those issues.

Dr. Parkin has applied this method to the CND. He says:

> 'The political movement which resulted is examined here for the light it throws on certain problems of current interest in the sociology of politics; it is not treated in the form of an historical narrative, neither are its general aims and strategies described and evaluated.'

The method has been to tabulate answers to questionnaires from 445 youth participants in the Aldermaston March in 1965 and 358 adult sup-

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porters in the same year. The results are then analysed in terms of 'Mass Movements and the Problem of Alienation,' 'Symbolic Protest,' 'Radical Politics and Social Class' or 'The Occupational Location of Middle Class Radicals.' Nothing very surprising arises in the resulting picture of the outlook and background of the average CND supporter. There can always be some limited value in such painstaking numerical analysis of the obvious, provided it is not made a substitute for political understanding.

But in the political sphere Dr. Parkin is at sea. The battle against nuclear weapons and Britain's nuclear role has a long history over two decades. The Soviet Union, the World Peace Movement and the Communist Parties have played a leading part in this battle over two decades. All this is outside the purview of Dr. Parkin. 'Opposition to nuclear weapons emerged in Britain in 1955,' says Dr. Parkin. He is innocently unaware of the Stockholm Appeal against the use of nuclear weapons which won 482 million signatures throughout the world in 1950, with the most far-reaching campaign and winning of signatures in Britain, or the Appeal against nuclear war which won 650 million signatures in 1955. Even as late as the general election of 1955 the Communist Party was alone among the political parties in opposing Britain's construction of the hydrogen bomb, which was supported by the Conservative, Liberal and Labour Parties.

What brought the change and upsurge of feeling which found reflection in the foundation of CND in 1958? Previously there had been widespread belief in Anglo-American nuclear monopoly or superiority; indeed, the first president of CND had in those earlier years advocated the threat of a preventive atomic war to compel Soviet surrender to the American Baruch Plan. By 1949 the Western monopoly was broken, but the illusion of Western nuclear superiority remained. The significance of the fact that by 1953 the Soviet Union had reached priority in thermonuclear development was not generally realised, since the information was buried well away in general press treatment. But when the first Sputnik circled the globe in 1957 no press manipulation could any longer conceal the truth which was visible to the eyes of men, women and children in every country. In October 1957 the first Sputnik was launched. In December 1957 the proposal was published in the *New Statesman and Nation* to found an organisation to campaign for unilateral nuclear disarmament. In February 1958 the CND was founded.

Dr. Parkin repeats the long exploded myth that the Communist Party initially opposed the policy of British unilateral nuclear disarmament and only came round to support it by a 'sudden switch' in 1960 after the CND had won wide support.

> 'Initially the official Party line was one of hostility to the idea of British unilateralism. Communist opposition to the unilateralist line continued throughout 1958 and 1959 . . . In May 1960 the Party finally reversed its line. After three years of consistent opposition to the unilateralist cause the Communists thus became committed to the same policy. No reasons were offered for this sudden switch.'

The facts are on the record. Ever since the Attlee Labour Government inaugurated the manufacture of a British atom bomb, the Communist Party consistently campaigned, not only for the international aim of general nuclear disarmament, but specifically for Britain's immediate unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons and

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removal of American nuclear bases in Britain, without waiting for an international agreement on general nuclear disarmament. Thus in the 1950 General Election Harry Pollitt's election broadcast declared:

> 'We would repudiate the Atlantic War Pact and prevent the manufacture of atom and hydrogen bombs.'

In the 1955 General Election the CP election manifesto declared:

> 'Communist candidates will challenge and oppose the decision of the Tory and right-wing Labour leaders to make the hydrogen bomb.'

In 1957 the Communist Party pamphlet *H Bomb Tests—End Them Now* by William Wainwright declared:

> 'Britain can be great and independent but only if we do not have to make nuclear weapons or receive them from the USA.'

All these official party declarations for British unilateral nuclear disarmament were thus continuously made during the eight years from 1950 to 1957 before the foundation of the CND.

The CND was founded in February 1958. Immediately the official party organ, *World News*, in its issue of March 15, 1958, in a statement on 'Unilateralism and the Fight for Peace' by George Matthews, proclaimed the party's welcome and support for CND within a few weeks of its foundation.

> 'The efforts of people like Lord Russell and J. B. Priestley and others associated with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the work of many in the Labour movement who advocate unilateralism are valuable contributions to the fight for peace and deserving of every support. The Communist Party and the *Daily Worker* have given every publicity and support to these activities and still continues to do so.'

How did this ancient and hoary lie, which Dr. Parkin has swallowed whole, about the Communist Party's supposed initial hostility to CND and to the objective of British unilateral nuclear disarmament, and supposed 'sudden switch' three years later, come into existence? The misconception probably arose because the CP always sought to clarify some confusions that were presented by some supporters of unilateralism, e.g. (1) that it would be sufficient to end the manufacture of the British H-bomb without also getting rid of the American bases and use of Britain as a launching site* and (2) that British unilateral nuclear disarmament would

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* Dr. Parkin actually quotes a statement from the *Labour Monthly* Notes of July 1959, conducting a polemic on behalf of unilateral nuclear disarmament and emphasising the vital necessity for it to include both British nuclear weapons and the siting of American nuclear weapons in Britain, as proof of 'Communist hostility to the unilateralist line' (p. 79). The reader who cares to look up these *Notes of July 1959 will find that they were devoted* to a celebration of the victory of a unilateralist resolution at the Municipal and General Workers' Conference in the preceding month as a sign of 'New Life in Britain' and pointing the way forward for a victory at a future Labour Party Conference (this took place in 1960) and conducting a vigorous polemic against the counter-programme of critics represented by Crossman on the Labour Party Executive, with the partial support of Gaitskell, and the Liberal Party leadership, who suggested that Britain should only renounce British nuclear weapons, but maintain American nuclear weapons and rocket bases in Britain. Against this Crossman-Gaitskell-Liberal Party opposition strategy, designed to circumvent the popular demand for unilateral nuclear disarmament, the Notes championed the aim of unilateral nuclear disarmament in Britain, and pointed out the obvious truth that for the fulfilment of this aim 'the decisive question is not the British H-bomb or atom bomb, but the basing in Britain of the American atom bombers or the rocket missile sites with the American-controlled warheads.' The Scarborough Labour Party Conference victorious resolution for unilateralism in 1960 agreed with this interpretation, and embodied the amendment proposed to remedy the deficiency in this respect of the previous Municipal and General Workers' resolution. The Scarborough resolution of 1960, carried by a majority of 907,000, and so worded as to leave Gaitskell and the Executive no loophole of escape, and consequently no alternative from their viewpoint save openly to repudiate and disobey the democratic decision of their own Party Conference, called for (italics added)

> 'the unilateral renunciation of the testing, manufacture, stockpiling *and basing* of all nuclear weapons in Britain.'

Dr. Parkin now calls this line of the Scarborough resolution 'hostility to the unilateralist line'! How silly can academic bumbling get?

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be sufficient in itself as an example to the other powers without needing to fight for an agreement for multilateral nuclear disarmament. Another cause could have been that the familiar complex cross-currents of particular votes by a variety of delegates, mostly non-party, in particular trade union conferences, often affected by all kinds of factors, were misinterpreted by some critics as equivalent to declarations of party policy, when party policy was in fact plainly set out in official documents. It is also true that some of the propaganda of some of the spokesmen of the CND in the early days took on a rather provocative anti-communist and anti-Soviet character, which led to local controversies; and the party centre had to advise its members never to let themselves be provoked by such propaganda, but to concentrate on the shared common aims, and on practical co-operation for these common aims, with constructive explanation of our political viewpoint on common problems, in the full confidence that such co-operation and experience in a united struggle will help to bring increasing clarity on the political issues involved in the tasks of the peace movement. This has in fact taken place.

All these controversies now belong to the past. The development has gone forward as anticipated; and the present programme of the CND, whose vital importance as a broad mass movement has been demonstrated anew more strongly than ever in this year's Aldermaston, now embraces a positive range of peace objectives, such as can win wide support of communists and non-communists alike and constitute the CND an invaluable distinctive partner, alongside the British Peace Committee, the Christian peace organisations, or the Vietnam campaigning bodies, in the very diversified array of the present stage of the peace movement in Britain.

R.P.D.

Black Skin White Masks

Frantz Fanon

MacGibbon & Kee, 232 pp., 25s.

FRANTZ FANON IS ALREADY FAMOUS for his book *The Wretched of the Earth*, a powerful indictment of colonialism, oppression and poverty. Now, following on this success comes a translation of his earlier book *Black Skin White Masks*.

Here Fanon considers the psychological devastation produced on black and white alike, by slavery, colonialism and exploitation. He examines the myths of racialism such as the alleged sensuality of the Negro, his sexual desire for white women, his 'instinctive' as opposed to 'rational' modes of thought, and he shows them to be the ideological weapons of the slave owners and colonial rulers. He shows though, how these myths trap the whites, how the means devised to maintain their supremacy cripple them psychologically.

We see too, the tragedy of the middle class, educated Caribbean, seeking to escape from his 'blackness' through cultural assimilation with Europe, torn by the conflict produced by the surrender of personality and being in the vain attempt to gain admission to a society which rejects the Negro.

The publishers claim that 'Fanon's lines cut across normal political groupings; the communist east, where colour is concerned, is as much a victim of white psychosis as the capitalist west.' Nowhere is this asserted in Fanon's text which essentially is an indictment of French colonialism.

JOAN BELLAMY

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NEITHER A BORROWER . . .

'THE July number is outstanding'—'A wonderful editorial this time (as always!)'—'A very clear guide to a complicated political situation.'

Comments like these from our readers are taken to heart by everyone who works to bring you *LM* each month. We know how much the magazine is valued in shedding light on dark places, but are our efforts having the maximum effect?

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Ironically enough, this same reader says, 'You will be pleased to learn that in this area each copy is shared by several people.' Yes, we are pleased, but what would really delight us would be to learn that these eager borrowers had become buyers. Speaking dialectically, the more we increase the 'private ownership' of *LM* the nearer we shall be to achieving—among other things—the public ownership of the means of production!

Lending a copy of *LM* to a friend is a good way to start winning new readers. But it's only a start. We need regular subscribers if we are to thrive. 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be'—Polonius had a point. And one that will be appreciated by our friends who know something of our financial problems. Not one of them will fail to be shocked by the dangerously low Fund total this month.

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Helen Falber.

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Specialists and Generalists, Edited by F. F. Ridley. Allen & Unwin, 214 pp., 32s.

The Housing Problem, Hilary Rose. Heinemann, 90 pp., 15s.

Bertrand Russell, Philosopher and Humanist, John Lewis. Lawrence & Wishart, 96 pp., 7s. 6d.

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